

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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SUBJECT: CONTINUED SPANISH PRESS REACTION TO ARIAS' SPEECH
TO THE CORTES

1. EDITORIAL INTEREST IN ARIAS' SPEECH CONTINUED
THROUGHOUT THE WEEKEND WITH MOST PAPERS COMMENTING HEAVILY
ON FOREIGN PRESS REACTION.

2. THE LEAD COMMENTARY IN "ARRIBA" (NATIONAL MOVEMENT)
SAID THAT THE VERDICT INSIDE SPAIN WOULD BE "DIVISION OF
OPINION" WHILE EUROPE WAS SAYING THAT EVERYTHING WAS
GOING ALONG FINE. THE COMMENTATOR SAID EUROPE WAS
SUPPORTING THE GOVERNMENT'S STANCE OF EVOLUTIONARY REFORM
WHILE, INSIDE SPAIN, THE LEFTWING OPPOSITION WAS SEEKING
RUPTURE VIA A "CONSTITUENT PROCESS," THAT IS, A WHOLE
NEW CONSTITUTION. VARIOUS SAMPLINGS OF FOREIGN REACTION
CARRIED IN THE SPANISH PRESS GAVE A LESS FAVORABLE
PICTURE OF THE EUROPEAN REACTION. A SAMPLING OF THE
ENGLISH PRESS IN "ABC" (MONARCHIST) SUGGESTED THAT
ONLY THE "DAILY TELEGRAPH" WAS EDITORIALY FAVORABLE.
"ABC QUOTED " THE GUARDIAN" AND " THE TIMES" AS
EXPRESSING DEEP RESERVE. THE GENERAL REACTION OF THE
GERMAN PRESS WAS SAID TO HAVE BEEN ONE OF SKEPTICISM:
THEY HAD REACTED MOST FAVORABLY TO THE EARLIER DECLARATIONS
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OF AREOLZA, BUT NOW SAW ARIAS' SPEECH AS BACK TRACKING.

3. "YA" (CATHOLIC INDEPENDENT), HOWEVER, CLOSE TO UNDERLINE THE FAVORABLE COMMENTS IN THE FOREIGN PRESS. THUS, THE GENERAL REACTION OF THE ENGLISH PRESS WAS THAT THE SPEECH MARKED OUT A "SLOW PASSAGE BUT A FIRM ONE". "YA" QUOTED "LE FIGARO" THAT THE "DEMOCRATIZING PROCESS HAS BEEN INITIATED IN AN IRREVERSIBLE MANNER" BUT THAT "ARIAS SAW HIMSELF AS OBLIGATED TO ACT WITH EXTREME PRUDENCE." IN GERMANY THE TERMS MOST REPEATED IN THE PRESS WERE SAID TO BE "PROMISE OF FREE ELECTIONS IN SPAIN" AND "DEMOCRACY IN THE SPANISH STYLE." IN BELGIUM ALL THE LEADING DAILIES WERE SAID TO UNDERLINE THE MIXTURE OF PRIDENCE AND REFORMIST SPIRIT.

4. IN SPAIN THE MAJOR MADRID DAILIES BEGAN TO NARROW THEIR COMMENT TO SPECIFIC THEMES. "YA" SAID THAT TWO ECONOMIC POINTS STOOD OUT IN THE SPEECH AS PRIMARY OBJECTIVES: FULL EMPLOYMENT AND PRICES POLICY, EMPHASIZING THE ROLE OF BOTH IN AIDING A "PEACEFUL AND ORDERLY TRANSITION." THE COMMENTARY BY THE IMPORTANT APERTURISTA, CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC GROUP "TACITO", ECHOED THE THEMES OF DISAPPOINTMENT OF THE MODERATE OPPOSITION. IT CALLED THE SPEECH "CONFUSED AND OBSCURE" AND "ANACHRONISTIC" SAID IT HAD ATTEMPTED UNSUCCESSFULLY "TO NOT OFFEND ANYONE BUT TO CONTENT ALL". NEVERTHELESS, "TACITO" FELT SOME POINTS HAD BEEN MADE CLEARLY ENOUGH: CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM, CLEARLY IMPLYING A REFERENDUM TO CONVERT THE CORTES SYSTEM INTO A BICAMERAL LEGISLATURE WITH ONE HOUSE ELECTED BY UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE; A NEW REGULATION OF THE RIGHTS OF ASSEMBLY AND PETITION; AND THE AFFIRMATION OF "JURISDICTIONAL UNITY", IMPLYING THE ABOLISHING OF THE TRIBUNAL OF PUBLIC ORDER. ON SATURDAY BOTH THE EDITORIAL IN "YA" AND A SEPARATE COMMENTARY SAID AGAIN THAT IN TRIMMING HIS SPEECH TO THE CONSERVATIVE TENOR OF THE "CORTES" ARIAS HAD FORGOTTEN THAT HIS TRUE AUDIENCE WAS "ALL SPANISH SOCIETY."

5. "ARRIBA'S EDITORIAL FRIDAY FOCUSED ON THE RE-AFFIRMATION OF THE "FUERO DE LOS ESPANOLES," (STATUTE OF BASIC RIGHTS) CITING SPECIFICALLY THE RIGHTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF ASSEMBLY AND PETITION, THOUGH QUALIFYING THESE RIGHTS, AS ALWAYS, BY SUBORDINATION THEM TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT. "ARRIBA STRESSED THE ATTACK ON PRINCIPLE VIII OF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT WHICH DECLARES LEGAL ALL MANNER OF POLITICAL REPRESENTATION EXCEPT THE ORGANIC: EITHER THE PRINCIPLES MUST BE REFORMED OR THE PARTIES MUST BE CHanneLED VIA THE FAMILYN THE MUNICIPALITY, AND THE SINDICATE." AMONG THE

DANGERS IT POINTED OUT WERE THAT THE WORKERS COMMISSIONS
HAD BEEN THE MOST WIDELY WRITTEN ABOUT POLITICAL GROUP
IN PERIODICALS IN THE PAST WEEK.

6. THUS FAR, "ABC" (MONARCHIST) HAS BEEN MOSTLY SATISFIED
"YA" (CATHOLIC INDEPENDENT) HAS BEEN DISSATISFIED WITH
THE AMBIGUITIES OF THE SPEECH BUT, NEVERTHELESS, APPROVING
OF THE COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRATIZATION. "ARRIBA" (NATIONAL
MOVEMENT) HAS GENERALLY APPROVED THE PRUDENCE OF THE SPEECH
AND HAS CONTINUED ITS INSISTENCE ON REFORM VIA "LEGALITY"
OFTEN INTERPRETED AS ADHERENCE TO THE PRINCIPLES OF
THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT. ALL WAIT UPON THE SPECIFICS
WHICH WILL DEFINE THE GOS' APPROACH TO POLITICAL DEVELOP-
MENT.
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